

Remarks/Arguments:

With this Response, claims 18 and 32 are canceled. Claims 9, 14, 15, 21, 26, 27, 29, 30, 34, 36, and 37 are amended. Claims 9-11, 14, 15, 21-22, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 34-36 are pending.

I. Amendments to the Claims

Independent claims 9, 21, 34, 36 and 37 are amended to recite the transition phrase "consisting of." With this amendment, the applicant submits that the transitional phrase "consisting of" excludes any element, step, or ingredient not specified in the claim. The phrase "consisting of" has also been added to clauses (a) and (b) of the body of the claim. This further limits the scope of those clauses to the elements recited in those clauses. The applicant notes that clause (a) of the independent claims has been rewritten for clarity.

In addition, the limitation of "wherein the volume of the lean NO_x catalyst system is 300% or greater than that of the volume of the oxidation catalyst system" has been removed. Accordingly, the applicant submits that the claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, is now moot.

The independent claims have also been amended to recite that the NO_x catalyst system platinum catalyst support is selected from the group consisting of "alumina, a zeolite, ceria, and zirconia."

In addition, independent claims 9 and 21 recite the limitation that the oxidation catalyst platinum group metal is present in the oxidation catalyst system at loading of greater than 30g/ft³, and is supported on a support selected from the group consisting of "alumina, a zeolite, ceria, and zirconia."

II. Comments With Respect to the Cited Prior Art

The currently pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art of Tsuchitani (EP 0 666 099) and Yokota (JP 08-114116).

As recited at page 7, lines 47-55 of Tsuchitani, the catalyst in the invention of Tsuchitani includes (A) catalytically active components comprising (a) at least one noble metal, and (b) at least one alkali or alkaline earth metal, and (B) a refractory inorganic oxide and optionally

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further comprises another catalytic component of at least one heavy metal. The catalyst system in Yokota is a three-way catalyst system where the bottom or downstream end of the three-way catalyst system includes a low oxidation activity zone. Downstream of the three-way catalyst system having its downstream high oxidation activity zone, is a separate high oxidation activity zone.

The applicant submits that the above-cited references include features that are outside the scope of the amended claims and would materially effect the basic and novel characteristics of the claimed invention. For at least this reason, the applicant submits that the pending claims are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by any combination of the cited prior art references.

The applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and early notification of the notice of allowance of the claims. If the Examiner has any questions regarding the scope or content of the amendments of the claims, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's undersigned representative to discuss.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher R. Lewis, Reg. No. 36,201
Christian M. Bauer, Reg. No. 51,443
Attorneys for Applicant

CMB/lrb

Dated: June 26, 2006


P.O. Box 980
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0980
(610) 407-0700

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June 26, 2006

Date



Lisa Bennett